

Message Text

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64
ACTION EB-11

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, BE
SUBJECT: WESTINGHOUSE PROBLEMS WITH ACEC

REF: BRUUSSELS 085: A-330 OF 12/27/73

1. AS ECONOMICS MINISTRY SECGEN BAEYENS PREDICTED LAST DECEMBER, AND CONTRARY TO THE HOPES THEN EXPRESSED BY WESTINGHOUSE OFFICIALS (SEE AIRGRAM REFERENCED), WESTINGHOUSE'S PROBLEMS WITH ITS ACEC SUBSIDIARY ERUPTED ANEW LAST WEEK AND ARE PROVIDING GRIST FOR LABOR AND MEDIA ATTACKS ON THE WAY MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES OPERATE IN BELGIUM.

2. SEPARATE, UNRELATED STRIKES INVOLVING 2,200 WHITE COLLAR EMPLOYEES AND 5000 BLUE COLLAR WORKERS HAVE CLOSED ACEC'S MAIN PLANTS AT CHARLEROI, MANAGEMENT HAS RETALIATED WITH A THREAT OF A LOCKOUT IN ANY PLANT WHERE EITHER ONE OF THE GROUPS REMAINS ON STRIKE AFTER APRIL 14. ACEC MANAGERS ASSERT THAT THEY CANNOT MEET CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS WITH ONLY ONE GROUP IF ACTIONS OF THE OTHER MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO WORK. BOTH GROUPS, THEY NOTE, ARE REPRESENTED BY THE SAME UNION. THE SOCIALIST/CHRISTIAN TRADE UNION FRONT CLAIMS THAT LINKAGE OF THE TWO ACTIONS BY MANAGEMENT CONTRADICTS UNCLASSIFIED

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BELGIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PRACTICES AND HAS SPECIFICALLY

QUERIED MANAGEMENT IF ITS ACTION WAS DIRECTED FROM
WESTINGHOUSE HEADQUARTERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

2. THE ACEC EMPLOYEES STRUCK MARCH 27 OVER MANAGEMENT'S
DECISION TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT OF 17 EMPLOYEES WHO
HAD BEEN FOUND REDUNDANT AND UNSUITABLE FOR FURTHER
EMPLOYMENT DURING A CASE BY CASE EXAMINATION THE SAME
EXAMINATION THAT FOUND FURTHER EMPLOYMENT OR EARLY PENSIONS POSSIBLE
FOR 27 OTHER EMPLOYEES. THE EXAMINATION WAS ACCEPTED IN JANUARY
AS A COROLLARY TO A STUDY OF THE CLOSING OF ACEC'S FOUNDRY
AT GHENT THAT FOUND RECENTLY IN FAVOR OF ITS CLOSING.
THE BLUE-COLLAR ACEC WORKERS STRUCK APRIL 1 OVER FAILURE
TO AGREE ON A NEW WAGE CONTRACT.

3. COMMENT: UNION SPOKESMEN ARE BILLING THE STRIKES
AS A CHALLENGE TO MULTINATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND WILL
PROBABLY DO THEIR BEST TO GENERATE SYMPATHY ACTIONS
WHERE THEY CAN. THE UNIONS HAVE WON ALL PREVIOUS STRIKES
BY ARE MOTIVATED BOTH BY FEAR ACEC WORKERS: THEY FEAR LOSING THIS
ONE WOULD OPEN THE WAY TO ADDITIONAL
TERMINATIONS OF ACEC EMPLOYEES IN THE FUTURE.
ACEC MANAGERS NOT ONLY ARE MOTIVATED BY THE SERIOUS
ECONOMIC EXIGENCIES REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, BUT THEIR
RESOLUTION IS ALSO BUTTRESSED BY THE FACT THAT THE
ACEC WORKERS REJECTED A CONTRACT SETTLEMENT PROPOSED
BY THEIR OWN REGIONAL NEGOTIATOR.

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